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Environment and sustainable development: implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21

Report of the Second Committee*

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I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 100 (see A/54/588, para. 2). Action on sub-item (a) was taken at the 26th and 44th meetings, on 29 October and 1 December 1999. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/54/SR.26 and 44).

II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolutions A/C.2/54/L.14 and A/C.2/54/L.58

2. At the 26th meeting, on 29 October, the representative of Guyana, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of and follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly" (A/C.2/54/L.14), which read:

* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in eight parts, under the symbol A/54/588 and Add.1-7.

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"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992, and the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21, held in New York from 23 to 28 June 1997,

"*Reaffirming* that Agenda 21 is the fundamental programme of action for achieving sustainable development and that the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, adopted at the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly, will enhance the full implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

"*Recognizing* that the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 includes a statement of commitment to Agenda 21 and the goals of sustainable development, an assessment of progress made since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in all main areas of Agenda 21 and other outcomes of the Conference, and recommendations on the future methods of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the programme of work of the Commission for the period 1998-2002,

"*Recognizing also* that mutually supportive efforts at the national and international levels are needed in the pursuit of sustainable development and that the gap between developed and developing countries points to the continuing need for a dynamic and enabling international economic environment supportive of international cooperation, particularly in the fields of finance, technology transfer, debt and trade, if the momentum for global progress towards sustainable development is to be maintained and increased,

"*Noting with concern* that, during the assessment and review of progress made at its nineteenth special session, the General Assembly concluded that although some progress had been made, especially at the local level, the overall trends with respect to the global environment had not improved, and emphasizing that the implementation of Agenda 21 in a comprehensive manner remains vitally important and is now more urgent than ever,

"*Noting* that the next review of the implementation of Agenda 21 is scheduled to be carried out by the General Assembly in 2002,

"*Noting also* the need for early substantive preparations for the ten-year review of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in order to attain meaningful results,

"*Recalling* its resolution 53/188 of 15 December 1998 and decision 7/9 of the Commission on Sustainable Development on preparations for the review of the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,

"1. *Stresses* the need to accelerate the full implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21;

"2. *Recognizes* that the Commission on Sustainable Development, within its mandate as specified by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/191 of 22 December 1992 and in the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, will continue to provide the central forum for reviewing progress and for urging further implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and other commitments made at the United Nations Conference on

Environment and Development or as a result of it, for conducting a high-level policy debate aimed at consensus-building on sustainable development and for catalysing action and long-term commitment on sustainable development at all levels;

"3. *Calls upon* the Commission on Sustainable Development to continue to undertake these tasks in complementing and providing interlinkages to the work of other United Nations organs, organizations and bodies active in the field of sustainable development, to play its role in assessing the challenges of globalization as they relate to sustainable development and to perform its functions in coordination with other subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and with related organizations and institutions, including making recommendations, within its mandate, to the Council, bearing in mind the interrelated outcomes of recent United Nations conferences;

"4. *Emphasizes* that the achievement of more substantive results by the next review of the implementation of Agenda 21 in 2002 will require concerted efforts at all levels, including by Governments, and calls upon all countries to fulfil their commitments to Agenda 21, and in this context also calls upon developed countries to fulfil the commitments they have undertaken with respect to financial resources and the transfer of environmentally sound technology;

"5. *Stresses* the lack of progress in the implementation of commitments at the international level, particularly in areas such as enhanced concessional financial resources and transfer of environmentally sound technology on concessional terms, calls for preparations for the ten-year review to focus on identifying challenges and constraints in meeting such commitments, and also calls for the development of mechanisms and measures to remedy this;

"6. *Underscores* the importance of the continued active and collaborative involvement of all relevant bodies of the United Nations system in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and requests the Secretary-General, in close collaboration with all relevant bodies of the United Nations system and taking into account the outcome of the deliberations in the Commission on Sustainable Development, to submit to the General Assembly for its consideration at future sessions, through the Economic and Social Council, in view of its coordination function, an analytical report on the measures taken within the United Nations system to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, including identification constraints and recommendations on how to address those constraints;

"7. *Stresses*, in this connection, the importance of high-quality preparations for the forthcoming ten-year review of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and requests the Secretary-General to include the views of Member States, *inter alia*, on suggestions for the forum, scope and nature of the preparatory process for the next comprehensive review of the implementation of Agenda 21, in the preliminary report for initial discussion at the eighth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development with a view to providing guidance to the Secretary-General in preparing his report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, and invites Member States to submit their views to the Secretariat by February 2000;

"8. *Renews* its request to the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development to invite Governments to submit proposals on how to improve the guidelines on the elaboration of national reports and, based on the information

received, to prepare a report to be submitted to the Commission as part of the preparations for the comprehensive review of the implementation of Agenda 21;

"9. *Invites* the regional commissions to provide a report through the Economic and Social Council, in view of its coordination function, on how their activities are contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21;

"10. *Also invites* the relevant functional commissions that are implementing chapters of Agenda 21 to submit a report through the Economic and Social Council, in view of its coordination function, on how their activities are contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21;

"11. *Further invites* the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme at its next session to consider how the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme are contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and to submit its views to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session;

"12. *Invites* the Secretary-General to take into account the preliminary discussions at the eighth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Economic and Social Council, and to submit a report to the General Assembly for consideration at its fifty-fifth session on possible ways and means of ensuring effective preparations for the review and to include proposals for analytical reports to be prepared for the review process."

3. At the 44th meeting, on 1 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Daúl Matute (Peru), introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of and follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly" (A/C.2/54/L.58), which he submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.14.

4. At the same meeting, the representative of India corrected the text by replacing, in operative paragraph 5, the words "including the adoption of measures" by the words "including the development of measures".

5. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of Canada (A/C.2/54/SR.44).

6. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.58 (see para. 9).

7. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.58, draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.14 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

B. Draft decision proposed by the Chairman

8. At the 44th meeting, on 1 December, on the proposal of the Chairman, the Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it take note of the report of the Secretary-General on measures taken in the United Nations system to accelerate progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (A/54/131-E/1999/75) (see para. 10).

III. Recommendations of the Second Committee

9. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Implementation of and follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Recalling the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992, and the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21, held in New York from 23 to 28 June 1997,

Reaffirming that Agenda 21[1] is the fundamental programme of action for achieving sustainable development and that the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,[2] adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session, will enhance the full implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

Recognizing that the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 includes a statement of commitment to Agenda 21 and the goals of sustainable development, an assessment of progress made since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in all main areas of Agenda 21 and other outcomes of the Conference, and recommendations on the future methods of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the programme of work of the Commission for the period 1998-2002,

Recognizing also that mutually supportive efforts at the national and international levels are needed in the pursuit of sustainable development and that the gap between developed and developing countries points to the continuing need for a dynamic and enabling national and international economic environment that is supportive of international cooperation, in particular in the fields of finance, transfer of technology, debt and trade, if the momentum for global progress towards sustainable development is to be maintained and increased,

Noting with concern that, during the assessment and review of progress made at its nineteenth special session, the General Assembly concluded that although some progress had been made, especially at the local level, the overall trends with respect to the global environment had not improved, and emphasizing that the implementation of Agenda 21 in a comprehensive manner remains vitally important and is now more urgent than ever,

Noting that the next review of the implementation of Agenda 21 is to be carried out by the General Assembly in 2002,

Noting also the need for early substantive preparations for the ten-year review of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in order to attain meaningful results,

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] Resolution S-19/2, annex.

Recalling General Assembly resolution 53/188 of 15 December 1998 and Commission on Sustainable Development decision 7/9 on preparations for the review of the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,[3]

1. *Stresses* the need to accelerate the full implementation of Agenda 21[1] and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21;[2]

2. *Recognizes* that the Commission on Sustainable Development, within its mandate as specified in General Assembly resolution 47/191 of 22 December 1992 and in the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, will continue to provide the central forum for reviewing progress on and urging further implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and other commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or as a result of it, for conducting a high-level policy debate aimed at building consensus on sustainable development, and for catalysing action on and long-term commitment to sustainable development at all levels;

3. *Calls upon* the Commission on Sustainable Development to continue to undertake these tasks in complementing and providing interlinkages to the work of other United Nations organs, organizations and bodies active in the field of sustainable development, to play its role in assessing the opportunities and challenges of globalization as they relate to sustainable development, and to perform its functions in coordination with other subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and with related organizations and institutions, including making recommendations, within its mandate, to the Council, bearing in mind the interrelated outcomes of recent United Nations conferences;

4. *Emphasizes* that the achievement of more substantive results by the next review of the implementation of Agenda 21 in 2002 will require concerted efforts at all levels, including by Governments, calls upon all countries to fulfil their commitments to Agenda 21 and, in this context, calls upon developed countries to fulfil the commitments that they have undertaken with respect to financial resources and the transfer of environmentally sound technology;

5. *Reaffirms* in this context the necessity of providing adequate and predictable financial resources, transferring environmentally sound technologies, and providing capacity-building and technical assistance to developing countries for the implementation of Agenda 21 and for the achievement of the long-term goals of sustainable development, and calls for the preparations for the ten-year review of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, without prejudice to other priority areas that may be identified during the preparatory process, to address the challenges and constraints in the implementation of the commitments of the Conference at all levels and to identify ways and means of accelerating the implementation of Agenda 21, including the development of measures to remedy the slow rate of progress of the international community in implementing Agenda 21;

6. *Notes* the need for assistance to be provided by the international community to countries with economies in transition in their efforts to achieve the objectives of Agenda 21 and the long-term goals of sustainable development;

7. *Emphasizes* the importance of the continued active and collaborative involvement of all relevant bodies of the United Nations system in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and requests the Secretary-

[3] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 9* (E/1999/29), chap. I.

General, in close collaboration with all relevant bodies of the United Nations system and taking into account the outcome of the deliberations in the Commission on Sustainable Development, to submit to the General Assembly for consideration at its fifty-fifth session, through the Economic and Social Council in view of its coordination function, an analytical report on the measures taken within the United Nations system to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, including the identification of constraints and recommendations on how to address those constraints;

8. *Recognizes* the importance, for the effective implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, of a multifaceted approach at the local, national, regional and global levels, as well as of the continued involvement of major groups, as defined in Agenda 21, and calls for the preparations for the ten-year review to facilitate continued involvement and input from those various levels and from major groups;

9. *Stresses*, in this connection, the importance of high-quality preparations for the forthcoming ten-year review of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, requests the Secretary-General to include the views of Member States in the preliminary report requested by the Commission on Sustainable Development in its decision 7/9,[3] and invites Member States to submit their views to the Secretariat by February 2000;

10. *Renews the request* to the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development to invite Governments to submit proposals on how to improve the guidelines for the elaboration of national reports and, based on the information received, to prepare a report to be submitted to the Commission as part of the preparations for the comprehensive review of the implementation of Agenda 21;

11. *Invites*, as part of the preparations for the ten-year review:

(a) The regional commissions to provide reports, through the Economic and Social Council in view of its coordination function, on how their activities are contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session;

(b) The relevant functional commissions that are implementing chapters of Agenda 21 to submit reports, through the Economic and Social Council in view of its coordination function, on how their activities are contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session;

(c) The Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to consider how the activities of the Programme are contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and to submit its views to the General Assembly at the earliest opportunity;

(d) The Global Environment Facility, in the course of its regular work, to provide a report on how its activities are contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session;

(e) The secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, to provide reports on how their activities are contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further

Implementation of Agenda 21 for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session;

12. *Also invites* the Secretary-General, while preparing the report requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 6 of its resolution 53/188, to take into account the preliminary discussions held by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session and by the Economic and Social Council, and to include in that report proposals for the analytical reports to be prepared for the review process.

* * *

10. The Committee also recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

Documents relating to the implementation of and follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly

The General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on measures taken in the United Nations system to accelerate progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21.[4]

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[4] A/54/131-E/1999/75.